

Application No. 10/624,847
June 19, 2006
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REMARKS

Applicants have cancelled claims 1, 66-72, 76, 114, 116, 120, 122 and 126, and have amended claims 29-38, 40, 43, 59-65, 73, 74, 77-86, 115, 117-119, 121, 123, 124 and 127-137. Claims 2-65, 73-75, 77-113, 115, 117-119, 121, 123-125 and 127-137 are presently pending in the application.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Ralph A. Lewis for his thorough search and review of the prior-art, his careful consideration and examination of the present application and claims, and his indication that claims 38, 39, 49-58, 60, 78, 88-113, 128, 136 and 137 contain allowable subject matter. In particular, Examiner Lewis stated that claims 88-113 are allowed and that claims 38, 39, 49-58, 60, 78, 128, 136 and 137 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Applicants have written all of the objected-to claims as independent claims in accordance with the above and submit that such claims are thus allowable.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 29-31, 35-37, 63, 65-68, 71 and 116-118 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Mori (U.S. Patent No. 4,852,849); rejected claims 116-118, 122-127 and 130-134 under 35 U.S.C. 102(c) as allegedly being anticipated by Jensen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,391,283); rejected claims 1 and 59 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Oxman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,718,577); rejected claims 1, 29-31, 33-37, 61, 63-68, 70, 71, 114-118, 120 and 121 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Alden (U.S. Patent No. 6,743,249); rejected claims 32, 40-48, 72-77, 79-87, 122-127 and 135 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Alden in view of Kipke et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,487,662); and rejected claims 62, 69 and 119 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Alden.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections but have amended the subject claims so that each independent claim contains the allowable subject matter of one of the objected-to claims in order to expedite the prosecution of the subject application.

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Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of same is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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